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**ALMO'S INDIAN LEGEND**

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After extended grazing by California Trail oxen, cattle, horses, and mules had left a wide zone of barren range land across their domain, Pocatello's Shoshoni band who occupied City of Rocks and other nearby valleys became alarmed. After 1860 they began to resist anymore emigrant traffic through that area. Particularly after Idaho gold rush expansion brought even more significant problems, along with devastating military campaigns, Shoshoni resentment to pressure from miners--and from extensive armed attacks--became much more intense. That unpleasant feature of Shoshoni life after 1860 led to a new dimension of tribal legends that responded to pressures from having to accommodate to farm as well as mining settlements in much of their country. A Shoshoni legend of this kind eventually gained a lot of attention from other people as well. Although its geographical setting is close to Almo and City of Rocks, it entered Idaho historical literature from North Ogden, Utah.

William Edward Johnston (who always was known as Edward) came to Utah in 1852 with his family when he was only five years old. When he grew up in North Ogden, he became a close friend of some local Shoshoni and Ute Indians. Eventually he learned both languages. He also heard fascinating accounts of clashes between Pocatello's band and emigrant parties near Almo. In 1872, he toured Almo Valley, where he noticed traces of campground circles along with remnants of wagons and emigrant equipment. Eventually he homesteaded there in 1887, and Winecus, one of his North Ogden informants, provided him a Shoshoni legendary account of a battle to explain those Almo relics. Later still, Edward's son, Charles Aaron Johnston, told his grandson, Charles J. Johnston (who now has a farm near Richfield) how Winecus noted that some 3,000 Shoshoni and Ute warriors assembled quietly near Almo, where they wiped out a party of some 300 emigrants from Missouri, whom they dumped into a couple of wells before they departed quietly to go on about their business. Some later reports of that affair raised emigrant losses to more than 340. Winecus' tale has great importance, however, because it counteracts a widely accepted emigrant tendency to pass off Idaho and Nevada Shoshoni peoples as poor, incapable diggers who could not compare with emigrant capabilities for surviving battles and thriving while passing through a desert country. Other accounts have embellished Winecus' lore, but his version brought a distinctive Indian aspect to a kind of folklore that has characterized emigrant traditions (that go back to frontier times) of Indian hazards.

**(This information has not been edited.)**